



## ***DoD HIV/AIDS Prevention Program Status Report:***

### **Swaziland**



## **BACKGROUND**

### **Introduction/General Information**

The population of Swaziland is estimated between 938,000 and 1.1 million, with estimates for average life expectancy varying widely, ranging from 37 to 51 years, reduced significantly due to the AIDS epidemic. English and siSwati are the official languages of Swaziland. The in-country literacy rate is estimated to be approximately 76%, and is well distributed between men and women. Swaziland is a developing nation with a majority of the population (60%) still dependent on substance agriculture; per capita income estimates vary significantly, ranging from \$1,350 to \$4,200.

### **Country HIV/AIDS Statistics and Risk Factors**

Swaziland has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Africa, with estimates ranging from 33% to over 36% of the adult population with either HIV infection or AIDS. The number of people believed to be living with HIV is 212,000. Identified significant risk factors include high population mobility, high-risk heterosexual contact with both multiple partners and commercial sex workers, and high incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In 1999, HIV prevalence at select STI clinics in Swaziland was over 50%.

### **Military HIV/AIDS Information**

There are no reliable estimates currently available for the size of military forces in Swaziland. The Umbutfo Swaziland Defense Force (USDF) has not performed systematic screening of personnel, and prevalence statistics are therefore unavailable. Current force-wide rates are believed to be similar to those found in the civilian population.

### **PROPOSED PROGRAM**

An HIV/AIDS prevention proposal from the USDF is pending.



The Umbutfo Swaziland Defense Force (USDF) crest.

## **PROGRAM RESPONSE**

### **Military-to-Military**

Program staff initially discussed USDF HIV prevention activities during visits to South Africa, and coordinated their military-to-military activities through the Office of Defense Cooperation in South Africa. In April 2003, a DHAPP logistician visited Swaziland to determine that country's needs. Shortages of hospital and laboratory space and equipment were observed and an Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbant Assay machine was inoperable due to maintenance problems. Limited military-to-military funds have been transferred to set up infrastructure and support for future program activities, and DHAPP awaits further communication and/or proposal ideas from the USDF before proceeding with additional military-to-military funding.



DHAPP sponsored an enthusiastic HIV/AIDS prevention program kick-off in Swaziland.

### **Contractor-Based Assistance**

Swaziland was the recipient of aid from an external contract funded by DHAPP. In 2001, Medical Care and Development International (MCDI) was awarded a contract to develop and implement an HIV/AIDS prevention program in conjunction with the USDF. Key components of the program included:

- Risk assessment
- Knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) surveys

- A mass awareness campaign
- Capacity building for HIV/AIDS-affected military personnel and their dependents
- Monitoring and evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the prevention program.

Using a train-the-trainer model, a cadre of USDF personnel taught HIV/AIDS prevention curricula in a group setting and conducted one-on-one educational and counseling sessions with troops.

MCDI developed a protocol for diagnosing and treating military personnel with STIs and HIV/AIDS, and provided the USDF with low-cost technology for diagnosing syphilis and HIV. MCDI trained medical personnel in universal precautions, blood safety, clinical protocols, and testing technologies.



DHAPP-sponsored festival for public awareness of HIV/AIDS.

MCDI assisted the USDF in evaluating the effectiveness of its HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives by developing tools to collect comprehensive and accurate data.

MCDI was awarded a follow-on contract in 2002 to continue and expand efforts begun in its Phase 1 efforts.

## **PROGRAM IMPACT**

### **Master Trainers and Peer Educators**

To date, 50 peer educators have been trained in HIV/AIDS prevention.

### **Number of Troops Trained**

HIV/AIDS prevention and sensitization workshops have reached approximately 2,700 USDF troops.

### **Laboratory Capability/Infrastructure**

DHAPP funds were used to purchase 3,500 test kits for use at the HIV center in the hospital shared by the military.

### **Mass Awareness**

Mass awareness campaigns were conducted in conjunction with World AIDS Day in December 2002, reaching a total of 2,500 USDF troops.

Subsequent awareness campaigns focused on conveying the overall HIV/AIDS prevention message and on eliminating the stigma and discrimination toward personnel infected with HIV.



Epilogue to an HIV/AIDS prevention educational video produced for the USDF with funding from DHAPP.